(b) The reasons for decrease in profit is mainly due to continuous decline in tariff which have led to reduction in revenue over the last year. MTNL is not only continuously improving its network but also introducing new and value added services, better customer care and state-of-art technology equipment.

(c) MTNL has declared 45% dividend which is tax free.

(d) The subscriber base has not dipped, however through better service, customer care and new services under stiff competition, MTNL has remained as market leader in basic services.

Mobile Telephone to Postmen

2583. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a scheme to provide WLL facilities to 8000 villages devoid of telecom facilities through 1800 rural postmen carrying WLL mobile phones;

(b) whether these postmen are to be paid commission from the earnings of the rural mobile phone facility, if so, the details of the scheme, indicating the cost involved therein; and

(c) the steps, so far, taken to implement the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) A Pilot scheme has been implemented on 24-12-2002 through Grameen Dak Sewak Delivery Agents (GDSDAs) of the Department of Post (D o P) to be called as "Grameen Sanchar Sewak (GSS)" who were willing to work as franchisee for BSNL attached to the rural Post offices. The telephone facility has been provided to the villages through the GSSs who carry a integrated Fixed Wireless Terminal (FWT) with display unit facility in a carry bag and visits door-to-door to provide telephone facility to the rural populace in this routine beat in the villages. The FWT costing around Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees ten thousand only) has been supplied by the BSNL. In this pilot scheme 1800 GSSs have been selected to extend telephone facility in about 8000 villages of the country. The scheme has been implemented in all the telecom cricules, except A&N, Haryana and Punjab.

The scheme is applicable on the existing STD/ISD/PCO franchisee basis. The GSS is entitled to 20% commission on all outgoing calls

whereas DoP is entitled to 5% commisison. The GSS can charge Rs. 5/- for passing on the message to the concerned persons in the village.

Replacement of telephone exchanges in Andhra Pradesh

2584. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have any plans for the replacement of all analogue telephone exchanges in Andhra Pradesh by digital electronic exchanges within a time frame; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) All the analogue telephone exchanges in Andhra Pradesh have already been replaced by digital electronic exchanges;

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Cellular services in Guwahati by Reliance

2585. SHRI INDRAMONI BORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the cellular phone services provided by the sole provider the Reliance, at Guwahati has not been running smoothly to the dismay of the subscribers;

(b) whether any steps are being taken by Government for improvement of the services; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Postmen with telephone

2586. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state: